

Message Text

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ORIGIN PM-07

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EA - MR. SNEIDER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

INFO CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 021693

FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR/AS/US

SUBJECT: CONSULTATION PROCEDURES

1. MACK WILLIAMS OF THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY CAME IN, UNDER INSTRUCTIONS, ON JANUARY 25 TO ASK FOR A THOROUGH RUNDOWN ON US PROCEDURES FOR CONSULTATION WITH ALLIES WHEN THE ALERT STATUS OF US FORCES HAS BEEN CHANGED. HE MADE SEVERAL SPECIFIC POINTS ABOUT AUSTRALIAN EXPECTATIONS OF BEING INFORMED IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, AND REFERRED TO THE UNDERSTANDING REACHED BETWEEN SECRETARY SCHLESINGER AND DEFENCE MINISTER BARNARD EARLIER THIS MONTH.

2. THE THRUST OF WILLIAMS' QUESTIONS REFLECTED CONTINUED AUSTRALIAN CONCERN ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE US NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS STATION AT NORTH WEST CAPE. ARE CHANGES IN THE ALERT STATUS OF US FORCES RELAYED THROUGH NWC; WILL WE BE TOLD WHEN YOU HAVE RELAYED SUCH INSTRUCTIONS THROUGH NWC; WILL THE US TELL THE GOA AT THE STATION, THROUGH THE US
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EMBASSY IN CANBERRA, OR THROUGH THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY

HERE ? HE ASKED WHAT US PRACTICE WAS ON PUBLICITY FOR CHANGES IN THE ALERT STATUS OF US FORCES, AND WHETHER THE US WOULD NOTIFY AUSTRALIA OF CHANGES IN THE ALERT STATUS OF FORCES OUTSIDE AUSTRALIA (AND BY IMPLICATION, UNCONNECTED WITH THE PACIFIC AREA).

3. WE EXPLAINED JCS PROCEDURES FOR ALERTING US FORCES AND OUR OWN REVISED PROCEDURES FOR COMMUNICATING THIS TO OUR AMBASSADORS AND OUR ALLIES, AS OUTLINED IN STATE 249808. WE CONFIRMED THAT WE EXPECT TO KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE AUSTRALIANS, AS ALLIES WITH MUTUAL INTERESTS IN PEACE AND STABILITY. OTHER THINGS BEING EQUAL, WE WOULD EXPECT THAT OUR EMBASSY IN CANBERRA WOULD BE ABLE TO NOTIFY THE GOA VERY RAPIDLY, AND WE WOULD ALSO HOPE TO BE IN A POSITION TO EXPLAIN THE REASONS FOR THE CHANGE AS WELL AS TO DISCUSS COORDINATION WITH THE GOA. IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR OUR OPERATIONS CENTER, IN A FAST-BREAKING SITUATION, TO NOTIFY INDIVIDUAL EMBASSIES IN WASHINGTON, BUT WE WOULD EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING REGIONAL BUREAUS UNDERTAKE THIS. WE ALSO CONFIRMED THAT WE WOULD NORMALLY HOPE TO BE ABLE TO NOTIFY THE AUSTRALIANS OF CHANGES IN THE ALERT STATUS OF US FORCES OUTSIDE AUSTRALIA. (WE NOTED THAT WE DO NOT HAVE "OPERATIONAL" FORCES IN THE NORMALLY UNDERSTOOD SENSE OF THE WORD, IN AUSTRALIA.) IT IS POSSIBLE THAT, AS A REDUNDANT SYSTEM, NWC MIGHT RELAY ALERT COMMUNICATIONS FROM HIGHER HEAD-QUARTERS TO INDIVIDUAL SHIPS, UNITS, SUBMARINES, ETC. IT SHOULD BE EXPECTED THAT ONCE US AND AUSTRALIAN FORCES HAVE BEEN INTEGRATED AT NWC, THEY WILL CONSTITUTE A BACKUP SYSTEM TO ENSURE THAT THE GOA IS AWARE WHEN THE STATION GOES ON ALERT. ON THE QUESTION OF PUBLICITY GIVEN TO CHANGES IN ALERT CONDITION, WE NOTED THAT THERE ARE NO HARD AND FAST RULES-- SOMETIMES THERE IS AN IMMEDIATE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT, AND AT OTHER TIMES, NO PUBLIC WORD FOR SOME LENGTH. WILLIAMS ASKED THAT WE KEEP THE GOA AMPLY INFORMED ABOUT ANY PRESS STATEMENTS, SO THE GOA CAN STAY ON THE SAME WAVE LENGTH; HE POINTED OUT THAT A FAILURE TO DO SO COULD WELL LEAD TO CONTRADICTORY, AND HENCE, VERY EMBARRASSING, STATEMENTS BY OUR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS.

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4. WILLIAMS EMPHASIZED IN VERY CLEAR TERMS, AND READING FROM INSTRUCTIONS, THAT THE AUSTRALIANS EXPECT TO BE INFORMED, ABOUT MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN POLITICAL AREAS THAT COULD LEAD TO A CHANGE IN THE ALERT CONDITION OF US FORCES. HE SAID THEY WILL WANT TO KNOW THE REASONS FOR THE CHANGE AND WILL EXPECT TO BE IN CLOSE TOUCH. HE POINTED OUT THAT THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY GIVEN TO THE FACT

THAT SECRETARY SCHLESINGER AND DEFENCE MINISTER BARNARD
HAD AGREED ON THE NEED FOR CONSULTATIONS IN PERIODS OF
TENSION, AND EMPHASIZED THAT THE GOA WOULD BE HIGHLY
RELUCTANT TO ACCEPT THE DOUBLE EMBARRASSMENT OF NOT ONLY
NOT KNOWING WHAT WAS HAPPENING ON ITS OWN TERRITORY,

BUT ALSO TO HAVE IT HAPPENING IN THE FACE OF A PUBLICLY
KNOWN COMMITMENT TO CONSULT: "IF YOU DO NOT CONSULT US,
YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT YOU WILL HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO PAY
THE PRICE."

5. WE TOOK NOTE OF WILLIAMS POINTS AND AGREED TO KEEP
THEM IN MIND. KISSINGER

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